

CITY OF BALTIMORE

MARTIN O'MALLEY, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner
210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: *Ingrid Wells*

PHONE: 443-984-2623

Email: Ingrid.wells@baltimorecity.gov

New Sleuth Answers Environmental Health Queries

***Introducing Ask Inspector O, quite possibly the world's first
advice column on environmental health regulations***

Baltimore, MD- (May 11, 2006)- There is a new sleuth about town to help Baltimore residents understand environmental regulations and other related mysteries.

The Baltimore City Health Department is proud to introduce Ask Inspector O, a web-based advice column for businesses and city residents about such issues as rat control, restaurant safety, pool hygiene and other important but little-understood facts of life.

For example, in one sample question, a restaurateur writes, "My deli case can't keep foods at the required 45 degrees; what should I do?"

Inspector O's responds that "Lukewarm food is potentially poisonous ... so you have to fix the problem." Inspector O then gives specific and timely guidance to reduce the risk of food borne illness.

Inspector O's introductory questions also include:

- I operate a swimming pool and members are always asking whether they can let their infants swim in the pool. I really have health concerns about this request; what do you recommend? -- *Preparing in North Baltimore*
- What can my neighbors and I do to prevent an invasion of rats in our community? -- *Worried Washington Village*
- I operate a day care center and the Environmental Sanitarian cited me for having only cold water at my bathroom handsink. I don't want the children to scald their hands; what should I do? -- *No Hot Water in Edmondson*

Inspector O's science-based words of wisdom can be located by visiting www.AskInspectorO.org. Inspector O will answer questions emailed to AskInspectorO@baltimorecity.gov

"I am very pleased that Inspector O is on the job in Baltimore," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health in Baltimore City. He explained, "Our task at the Health Department is

to help residents and businesses understand what they need to do to stay healthy and protect the health of others.”

“If Baltimore City heeds the advice of Inspector O, our environmental health sanitarians will issue fewer citations and, more importantly, fewer city residents will fall ill,” said Olivia Farrow, assistant commissioner for environmental health at the Health Department.

Assistant Commissioner Farrow and Inspector O have yet to be seen in the same room at the same time.

#